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POINT OF VIEW Missiles in Laos And the C. I. A.

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Where did the missile gap go?

How come the C.I.A. was 96.5 per cent wrong in its estimates of Soviet ICBM strength?

Were those who shouted endlessly about the missile gap guilty of hallucinations or of bad faith?

Why have so many who believed there was a missile gap now changed their minds?

Are the present intelligence estimates of the comparative missile strengths of Russia and America as erroneous as they were before?

Who done it?

In whom can we trust?

Can we have faith in the C.I.A. — the misfit, mischievous and misled organization of amateurs who led us down the garden path in the Cuban fiasco? The same secret, unsupervised, billion-dollar-a-year boondoggie network of ivy-league, cloak-and-dagger boys who sabotaged official American policy in Laos recently by torpedoing the negotiations being carried out by our State Department? The C.I.A. who fumbled the ball in Guatemala . . . who have constantly meddled in the internal affairs of other governments — sometimes with results which have been disastrous?

THE C.I.A. IS THEORETICALLY under the supervision of Congress. But its past history shows that, in reality, it has gone its own uncontrolled and irresponsible way, serving its own purposes for all practical purposes.

And this on the grounds of secrecy. But secrecy does not preclude effective Congressional control. What we badly need is the establishment of a permanent committee of Congress on the C.I.A. — a committee which would be able to see to it that the C.I.A. is kept under constant supervision, that its only information is that which is given to it by the State Department, and that it is kept out of the internal affairs of other governments.

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STATINTL

If war is too important in this atomic age to be left to the generals, then intelligence is certainly too important to be left entirely to its own devices.

LIMITED SPACE PERMITS the mention of only one of the many shameful instances of damage and war-risk attributable to the uncontrolled, Machiavellian personnel of the C.I.A., misled until recently by Allen Dulles. Dulles, now mercifully retired, is still spouting off in speeches and public statements to the press on delicate international matters. His meddling goes on and on.

The current Laos story, in brief, is this:

The Fourteen Power Conference in Geneva reached a provisional agreement on the reunification and neutralization of Laos. In the Laotian capital, American and Soviet representatives worked together to secure the cooperation of the three princes who represent the views of the West, the neutralists, and the Communists.

Suddenly hopes of a peaceful solution vanished when Boun Oum, a thoroughly untrustworthy playboy prince but our choice for leadership, and his Minister of Defense, General Phoumi Nosavan, walked out and refused to cooperate. Why? What reversed the trend toward settlement?

Le Monde of Paris, the most respected of European newspapers, called what had happened "the most amazing situation in contemporary diplomacy." Le Monde went on to explain: "Almost every morning, the U.S. Ambassador, M. Brown, visits General Phoumi to persuade him to accept the formula of coalition which is alone capable of permitting reunification of the country and establishment of peace. Every morning an expert of the C.I.A. comes to cheer up the General and incite him to oppose . . ."

How can this sabotage be referred in the tin-debox that is Laos? The fires of a world conflagration could be lighted right now.

Later, the Kennedy administration cracked down on the C.I.A. activity and persuaded Prince Boun Oum to resume negotiations. But how could these characters representing American intelligence service be allowed to sabotage again our American policy, in a way that could have caused the outbreak of war?

This was the C.I.A. in Laos.